

New Meat Processing Facility in the Heart of Ranching Country

Dell Mercantile is a general store in the small town of Dell in southwestern Montana, selling gas, groceries, hunting and fishing licenses, auto supplies, gifts, and serves as the local post office. The enterprise also has a wild game and domestic meat processing operation that has undergone phenomenal growth.

"We've seen our meat processing business triple in the past seven years and have already gone through one expansion," said Paul LeMay, Jr., manager and operator of Dell Mercantile & Meat Processing. "We have simply outgrown our current building and believe the demand for this type of facility in southwestern Montana is supported by the large number of cattle ranches in this area. A local state-inspected facility would result in a cost savings for local ranchers by not having to transport their animals at least 100 additional miles."



LeMay and his partners, Jeanne and Joel Schnitzler, began working with **Headwaters RC&D Food and Agricultural Development Center** in Butte on a \$150,000 financing package for the construction of a 2,000-square-foot building to serve as onsite kill facility and meat processing plant. They were recently awarded a \$30,000 grant-loan combination through Montana's Growth Through Agriculture program as part of that financial package with which the

Headwaters Center is assisting.

Dell Mercantile will construct the new meat processing facility in the heart of ranching country in southern Beaverhead County. The building will meet all requirements for a state-inspected facility. It will provide needed cooler and freezer space, as well as the saws and tables to process more than 400 animals each year.

"We are grateful for this opportunity to work with Headwaters RC&D Food and Ag Center and the Agricultural Development Council," added Jeanne Schnitzler, co-owner of Dell Center LLC. "We hope our expanded facility will be a great success and will be able to **provide additional jobs in a rural area where it is difficult to find work.**"

Janice Copeland, Headwaters RC&D Loan Officer, said, "Working with Jeannie and Paul on expansion of the Dell Mercantile has been a great project. They have built their business up to be the economic and social hub of Dell and the surrounding area. Headwaters RC&D Food & Ag Center works to build strong, vibrant communities. This is a good example of how the Food & Ag Development Center and Growth Through Agriculture programs complemented each other to create an economic impact in this very rural area of southwestern Montana."